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EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:30 PM MDT

State of Utah  
Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr.  
State of the State Address  
January 18, 2005

President Valentine

Speaker Curtis

Honorable Members of the Utah Supreme Court

Lieutenant Governor Herbert

Constitutional Officers

Senators and Representatives

Mayor Starley of Fillmore

Honored Guests

Fellow Utahns

I am honored to be here tonight with my wife Mary Kaye – the finest human being I have ever known – and our family, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude. I was elected,  
but together we serve.

I want to thank the great citizens of this State for allowing me this opportunity to be your governor, and I do so with honor and humility.

As citizens, you make this State work: you create the jobs, work hard, pay the taxes, raise families and ensure a better tomorrow.

Yours is the most important task of all, and I thank you for doing it.

This location gives me a deep sense of purpose. It is where my family's roots are. A few blocks from here you will find generations of my ancestors – Huntsmans, Robisons, Melvilles, and Bunkers who all rest in the town cemetery.

Their tombstones say it all – father, son, daughter, mother, soldier, saint, educator, farmer. They are the ones who made this town of Fillmore in their own words, “The Center of the Universe.”

My ancestors, no doubt, would be as surprised as I am to be delivering this message from our State’s first territorial capitol.

Nearly 150 years ago, Brigham Young gave the opening address at the beginning of the first legislative session of the Utah Territory inside this very room. His vision for our land focused on promoting education, industry and the production of goods, while keeping laws easy to understand and ultimately seeking to obtain the Territory’s admission into the Union as a State.

It was a simple vision, but its relevance rings true even today.

Tonight, my brief words are driven by a personal philosophy that will serve as a backdrop for everything I do.

I would like to begin by delivering a few thoughts on public service that I recently shared with my new cabinet and senior staff.

1 – We are temporary custodians of our positions of responsibility, and with this service will come a strong sense of duty, obligation and integrity.

2 – We recognize that the taxpayers of this State are the customers and pay the bills.

3 – Public service is a privilege, not a right.

4 – Although we might not always agree on how we get there, the interests of our people always will be put first.

We owe a great debt to our ancestors--whether they came in 1847 or, like Mary Kaye’s family, during the last generation.

I am mindful of the living legacy they have left for us. I, too, want to ensure a successful legacy for the coming generations.

Our system of government, warts and all, is the envy of the world and relies on each succeeding generation to step up and put service first.

This service continues today in many forms – police, fire, educators – and during a time of conflict – our military. Today, our State’s National Guard has close to 1,000

soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan with an additional 500 currently in route.

Since the beginning of the global war on terrorism, more than 80 percent of our Utah National Guardsmen and women, both Army and Air, have been mobilized.

This is in addition to those from Hill Air Force Base, one of the finest military installations in the country – that we will fight to keep in our State.

We thank their spouses and families who sometimes bear the greatest of hardships.  
May God bless you all.

Tonight, I propose a new partnership between this State Legislature, our Administration, and all residents of Utah. There never has been a better time to pull together and realize the most challenging, yet most rewarding work lies ahead.

My Administration's policy priorities focus on four common-sense fundamentals – this card that I carry in my pocket is a daily reminder of these priorities – economic revitalization, education, quality of life and governance. Each one of these priorities has purpose in helping shape our tomorrow, each a reminder of our common destiny.

And so today we must begin to pay less attention to party affiliation or which branch of government we come from and focus more on using our differences to strengthen our communities, our cities, and our State.

The economy will be central. In recognizing the task ahead, we must be realistic about our competitive position as a State.

No longer is the marketplace just along Main Street as it was for my grandfather here in Fillmore.

Today, the marketplace is regional, national and global – with a level of speed and complexity not seen before in human history.

We either rise to meet the competitive challenges of today or we fall behind.

In today's world, there is no such thing as managing the status quo.

For Utah, this should be good news as our competitive advantages are many:

--human resources,

--research universities,

--entrepreneurial drive,

-- and our geographic location as the “Crossroads of the West.”

Now is the time to go to work on our competitive environment.

With capital flows that are instantaneous, our competition isn’t just Colorado, Nevada, and California, but also China, India, and Canada.

When it comes to economic development, treading water will not be acceptable in my Administration.

We must have job growth that keeps pace with population growth. And for a state now growing at twice the national average -- this will not be easy.

We must have good paying jobs that allow people to support a family and cover a mortgage – not those well below the national average. The greatest state in America deserves better.

We need to be able to pay our bills going forward so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy the same quality of life experience that we enjoy.

We want an environment of opportunity for all who wish to call Utah home.

To that end, we need a tax policy that is not only friendly to our citizens, but also creates a competitive environment for business. Business as usual-- will leave us behind our neighboring states.

During the next year, we must take a hard look at modernizing our tax structure which will have long-term benefits for our economy.

This can truly serve as an economic development tool to encourage entrepreneurs to keep their businesses located in our State and re-invest their capital time and time again.

It will foster existing industry to expand and consolidate operations from around the world and allow us to attract the kind of commerce that we are seeking in our great State-- based on what we do best.

I recognize that tax reform is a complex and challenging issue that will take all of our efforts to implement. An important first step we can take this session is to allow for

double-weighted sales regarding our corporate-income-tax formula, with the game-plan to eliminate the corporate tax over the next few years.

This approach must be coupled, however, with a short-term strategy on sales and income taxes to ensure no revenue holes are left.

I need your help on this. The last time we had a major revision in the tax code was in 1959 – before I was even born.

The personal computer didn't exist. The word "internet" hadn't entered our lexicon.

Our economy relied on mining, not microchips. Eisenhower was president. It is time for change.

I will encourage efforts after this legislative session to review all aspects of our tax code and continue to find solutions that benefit Utah families, encourage economic growth and provide a stable revenue source for our State.

Focusing on economic development is vitally important because it will provide us with the resources necessary to pay for a world-class education for our children.

There is no expenditure more critical to our future success.

I am reminded of a letter I recently received from my son's principal at Clayton Intermediate School – Rosemary Barron. She wrote:

“I urge you always to focus on public education. It is the vehicle to prepare our students toward active participation in our democracy. Nothing could be more important.”

I thank Rosemary for that reminder.

In fact, our recently proposed budget calls for more funding support for public education than this State has seen in nearly a decade.

We are bolstering support for reading, launched by Governor Walker, and for the first time --math.

And we'll soon focus on reading comprehension and writing. All of which are key pillars of literacy necessary for success in today's world.

I come from a long line of educators, who looked upon their task of shaping

tomorrow's minds with immense pride. It is time to figure out a way to pay our educators more.

My budget recommendation offers unprecedented support for beginning teachers who are willing to become invested in the system.

Also, after hearing too many sad stories about our good teachers paying for rulers, erasers, and pencils out of their own pocket, I have put 5.5 million dollars of new money into classroom supplies and materials.

In the real world this means that each elementary school teacher will find an additional \$300 dollars more for their classroom.

I fully support Utah's public schools, public charter schools and school choice.

I also will encourage business leaders to become more actively involved with education through implementing programs that unite them with parents, teachers, and students.

It is time that every child had a learning environment that catered to their needs so they can have the education they deserve.

As some have said before, "Children are the messengers we send to a time we'll never see."

What we are finding – not surprisingly – is that no two children learn alike. All children learn differently.

My own six kids – all of whom are in public schools – defy any easy categorization.

Our on-going challenge will be to find the genius hidden within each of our individual students.

We will then need to ensure that our students not only have the tools, but the confidence needed to make meaningful contributions throughout their lives. Also, when evaluating our educational system, let's look to additional indicators of success.

Instead of just the student to teacher ratio, let's look to things like an adult to student ratio.

Let's tap into our vast volunteer potential and can-do spirit by asking parents and

grandparents to come back to the classroom for purposes of mentoring, tutoring, and career guidance.

While we are fortunate that this year's economic picture is bright, there are many unmet needs to be addressed.

First, for too long, the dedicated people who serve the State of Utah have not had a meaningful pay increase. They need one, and deserve one, and I am committed to working with you to provide it. My budget calls for the largest compensation realignment in more than a decade.

Also, those of our friends and neighbors with some of the greatest health care needs, recently lost funding for dental and vision care.

I support restoring and have budgeted 5 million dollars in funding for the Medicaid program that covers these costs. It's the right thing to do and we know that preventative care will save costly emergency care in the future.

Transportation issues must also be addressed now if we are to avoid total gridlock later. Promises made must be promises kept. For example, when it comes to the Legacy Highway – let's build it.

And when it comes to taking the steps necessary to build commuter rail – let's take them. I have tasked Lieutenant Governor Herbert to work with legislators and residents from throughout Utah to do what we must-- to improve our roads, enhance our water systems, and make certain that Utah's infrastructure is in solid, working condition.

One concern that could negatively impact our State for generations is the storage of class B & C radioactive waste. My position on this is clear: B & C waste will not be dumped in Utah. As your governor, I will do everything in my power to keep hotter levels of nuclear waste out. The most effective and permanent solution is to pass tough legislation. I will work with legislators--and by the time this legislative session is finished, we should no longer be discussing the possibility of B & C waste entering this state.

We will take measures during my Administration to protect our unparalleled quality of life. We live in Utah because of what it represents: home, family, and hope.

No matter where you travel or how you travel -- north, south, east or west – you meet some of the finest people, doing the most marvelous things for the betterment of their loved ones, their community, and their State.

I encounter good people in city parks, local cafes, churches, on ranches, and in high-rises – virtually every where I go. Each time my heart is touched and I am reminded that it is my sacred duty and responsibility to make sure we have a viable, core infrastructure--and plan to pay for it in place--to meet our growing needs well into the future.

Finally, we will focus on excellence in governance. I will minimize politics and maximize service.

I intend to implement an ethics-reform package for the Executive Branch that includes full disclosure.

We will also implement a mandatory cooling-off period of one year for elected and appointed officials in the Executive Branch before they can become lobbyists. As governor, I believe in term limits. No Governor should serve more than two terms.

We will also focus on campaign-finance reform to keep fairness and transparency in government.

I strongly believe these measures will make us more accountable for our actions and give us the ability to serve you-- who in turn will have greater confidence in your public servants.

As a newcomer to elected politics, I come before you tonight with this simple plan in place to pave the way for a better Utah. It won't be easy. It won't work without cooperation between all branches of government.

It won't be achieved tomorrow or within the next month.

But it will be accomplished as we put partisanship aside and rally together toward a common destiny – that of jobs, education and quality of life.

Last week I witnessed first hand the devastation in Washington County as I stood on the edge of the Santa Clara River with families who watched their homes swept away by the unforgiving flood.

I can think of few things more emotionally wrenching than losing one's home. We truly have citizens in need. Nevertheless, I took great hope as I joined with a volunteer army of thousands who stood shoulder to shoulder in the rain and mud to fill sandbags, remove debris and do all that they could to relieve the suffering of their friends and neighbors.



I saw in action what each of us knows to be the case: Utah's greatness isn't her majestic mountains or awesome research facilities – it's our people.

My desire as the 16th governor of the greatest state in America is to serve each of you to my fullest potential, to listen to your concerns, and work with you to find solutions.

This next year can be the beginning of an unprecedented period of cooperation and community building.

People truly reaching across boundaries – be they religious or race, political or geographic. A state that is sincerely civil and respectful of each individual's pathway toward life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness will be our goal.

And I can promise you that as we work together, we will become a better people and a better State.

May God bless Utah and the United States of America.

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